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ROBINSON
HARRIS
VON GRAWBARGER

STARMAN



THE DAY BEFORE THE DAY TO COME.

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LOOK, I AGREED TO
READ YOUR DAMN
BOOKS. THAT I
AGREED TO.

BUT I AM NOT YOUR
TRAINED MONKEY BOY.
YOU NEED A FAVOR,
GO FIND A FRIEND.

FOR THE
LAST
TIME.

I...AM...NOT...
YOUR...AMIGO,
AMIGO.

YOU
GOT
THAT?





IT'S NOT A FAVOR I ASK. IT'S NEED OF YOU...THIS CITY HAS NEED OF ITS HERO. I ACT MERELY AS HERALD TO THE THREAT YOU WILL ULTIMATELY HAVE TO FACE.



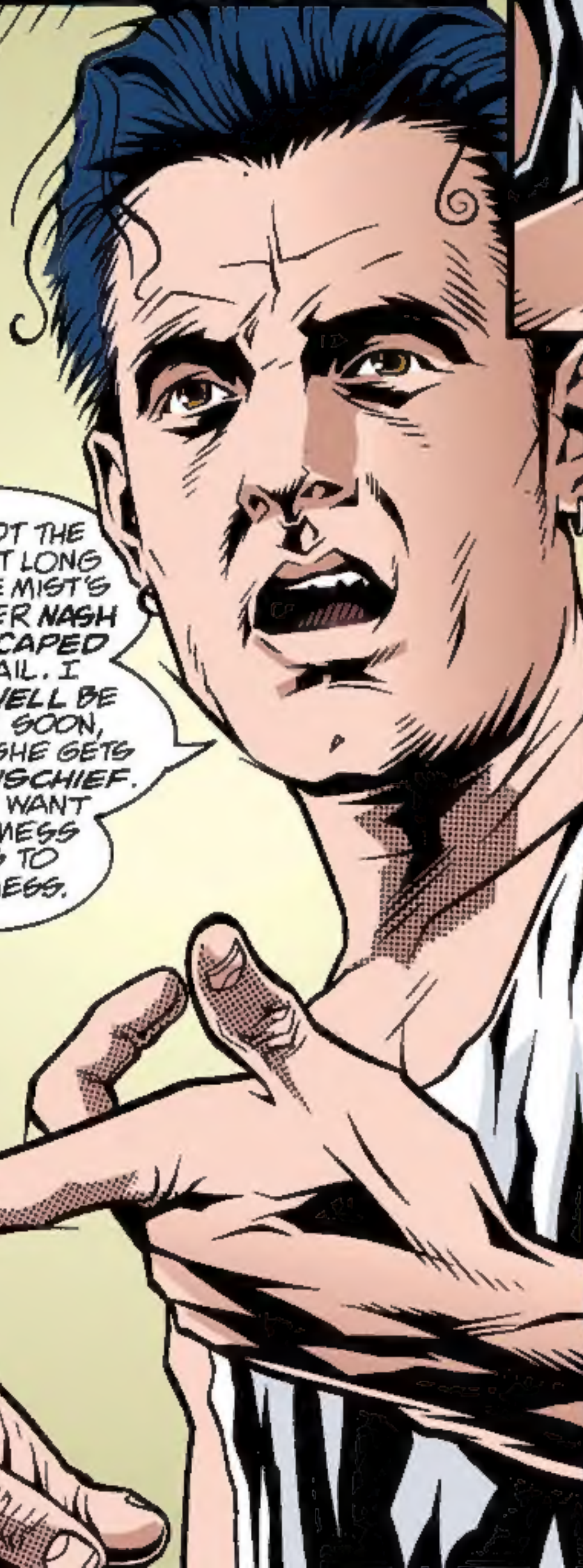
YEAH, WELL MR. HERALD, YOU CAN BLOW YOUR TRUMPET SOMEWHERE ELSE. TELLING ME WHAT I HAVE TO FACE... WHERE DO YOU GET OFF?

I REPEAT, THE CITY HAS NEED OF ITS HERO. YOU ARE THAT HERO, ARE YOU NOT?



MAYBE.

BUT, I GOT THE CALL NOT LONG AGO. THE MIST'S DAUGHTER NASH HAS ESCAPED FROM JAIL. I MIGHT WELL BE NEEDED. SOON, TOO, IF SHE GETS UP TO MISCHIEF. I DON'T WANT YOUR MESS ADDING TO THAT MESS.



ALL RIGHT, CHASE HER. CATCH HER. BUT LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY, FIRST. THE STORY OF THIS NEW EVIL, WHICH CONCERNS ME SO.

NEW TO THE OPAL, AT LEAST. IT'S ACTUALLY A VERY OLD THREAT.





MAN, YOU AND YOUR TALES. I'M SURPRISED YOU EVER HAD TIME TO BE A BAD GUY ONCE, WITH ALL YOUR STORY TELLING.

DO YOU KNOW OF OSCAR WILDE? HIS WORK?

NO, I'M A COMPLETE MORON.



HE TOLD ME OF *SOMEONE* HE'D ENCOUNTERED IN HIS PAST. *SOMEONE* WHO HAD LIVED FOR MANY LIFETIMES.

LIKE YOU?

LIKE ME, *INDEED*. AND AS A *RESULT*... BECAUSE WE BOTH SHARED THAT *SINGULAR* TRAIT, THIS CHARACTER INTERESTED ME.

WILDE WROTE A FICTION ABOUT THIS VERY REAL IMMORTAL.



THE PORTRAIT OF DORIAN GRAY.

YOU'RE SAYING THAT WAS REAL? A GUY FOREVER YOUNG, WITH HIS OTHER, OLDER SELF EVER AGING IN A PICTURE. WELL, FUNKY.





NOT PRECISELY. OSCAR WAS... UNCERTAIN IF HE SHOULD WRITE THE TALE. EVEN IN HIS LIGHTER WORKS, THE PLAYS, HE WAS A MAN FOND OF ALLEGORY.

THIS PLAYED HEAVILY IN DORIAN GRAY. THE TRUTH GAVE WAY TO SYMBOLIC EQUIVALENTS UNDER OSCAR'S PEN.



SYMBOLIC?

THE MAN WAS A STUDENT AT OXFORD DURING WILDE'S DAYS THERE. HIS NAME WAS...



IS?

THAT'S RIGHT. HIS NAME IS MERRITT. HE WAS A STUDENT OF THE OCCULT... AT SOME POINT THIS INVOLVED HIM SUMMONING A DEVIL... A DEMON... OR SOMETHING OF THAT SORT.



YOU SEEM SO OFF-HAND WHEN SAYING IT.

JACK, MY LIFE HAS BEEN A... MOSAIC OF SUCH HORRORS. YOU SEE ONE DEMON, YOU'VE SEEN THEM ALL.

GREAT. HAVING JUST ENCOUNTERED MY FIRST, WHAT A WARM FEELING YOU'VE GIVEN ME.

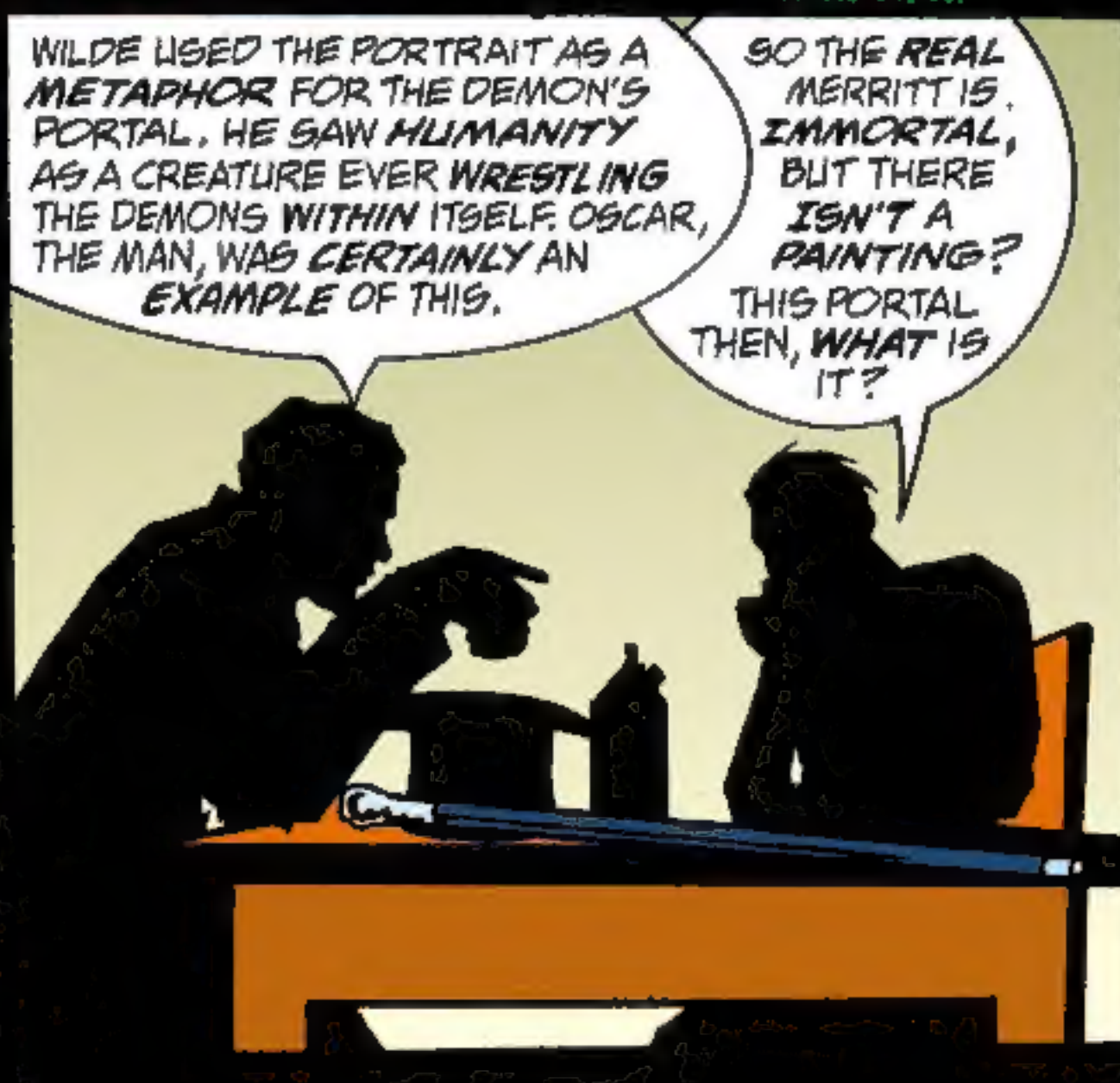


ANYWAY, MERRITT MADE A CONTRACT WITH THE DEMON. ETERNAL LIFE, IN RETURN FOR MERRITT BEING THE PROTECTOR OF A PORTAL THROUGH WHICH THE DEMON MIGHT APPEAR PERIODICALLY TO SNATCH SOULS.



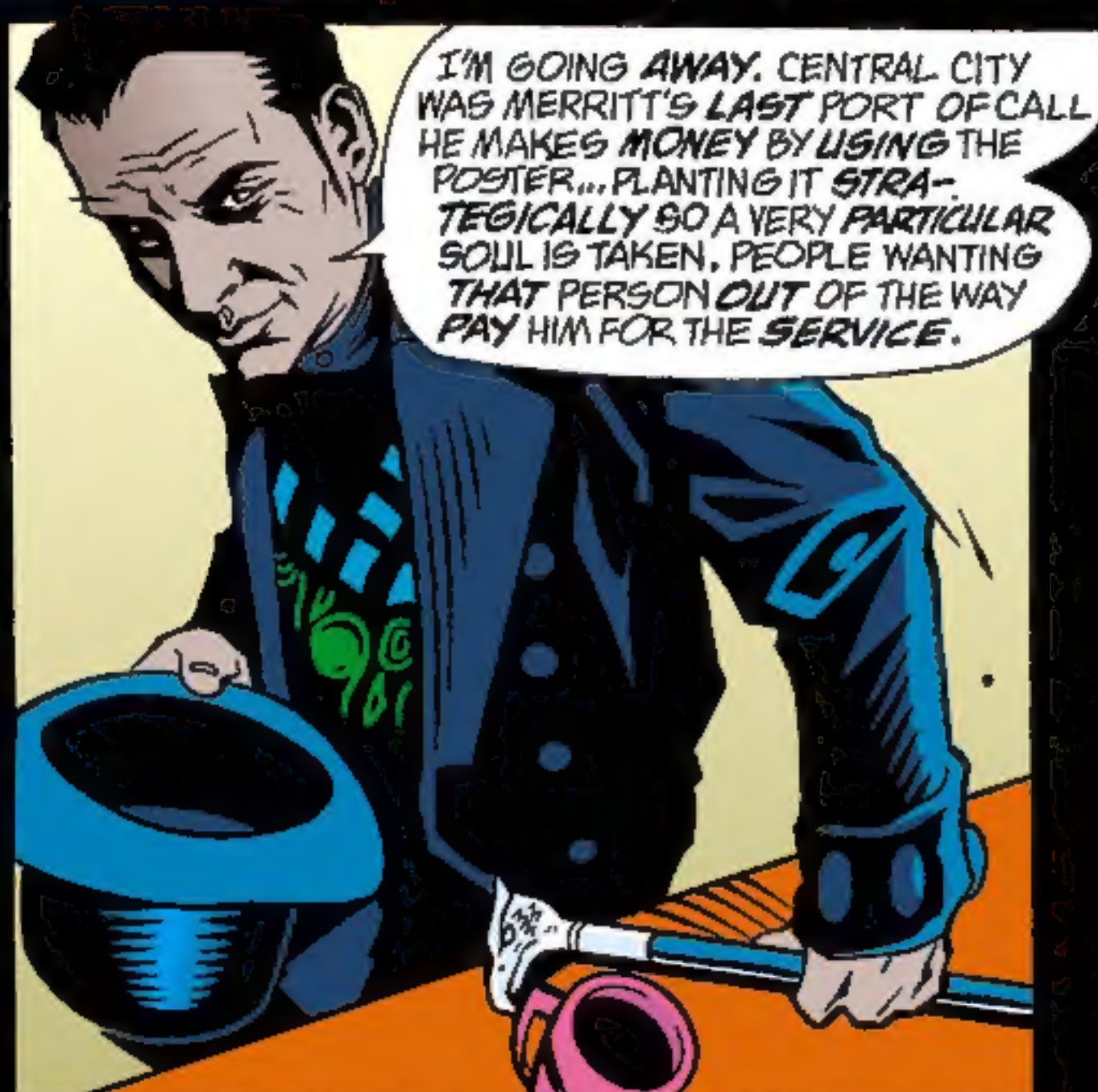
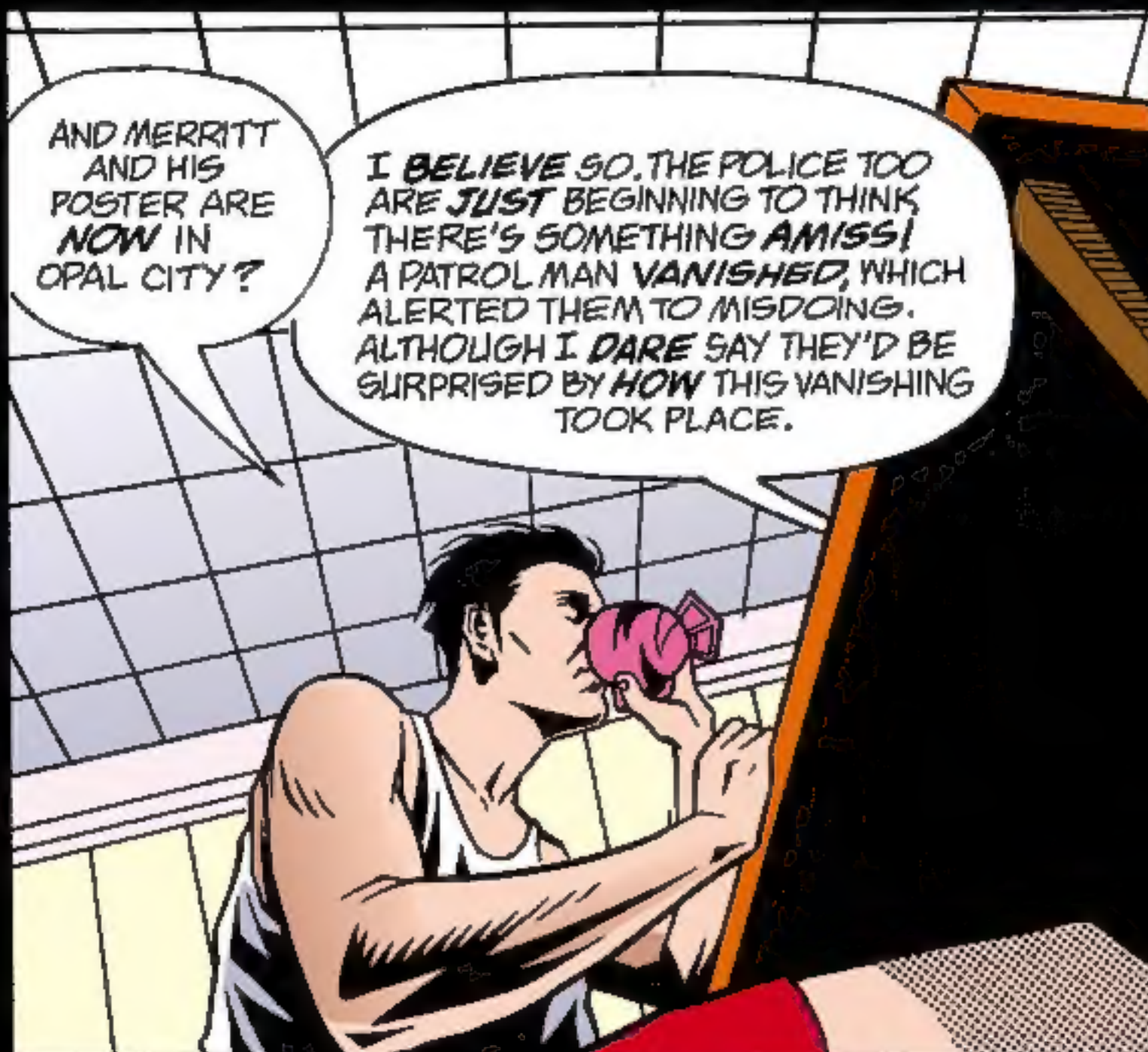
SNATCH SOULS?! ARE YOU FOR REAL?!

ARE YOU FOR REAL?!



WILDE USED THE PORTRAIT AS A METAPHOR FOR THE DEMON'S PORTAL. HE SAW HUMANITY AS A CREATURE EVER WRESTLING THE DEMONS WITHIN ITSELF. OSCAR, THE MAN, WAS CERTAINLY AN EXAMPLE OF THIS.

SO THE REAL MERRITT IS IMMORTAL, BUT THERE ISN'T A PAINTING? THIS PORTAL THEN, WHAT IS IT?



HE'S A **PAID KILLER** IS WHAT YOU'RE SAYING? **FOSTER** AND A PET DEMON **INSTEAD** OF A GUN OR A KNIFE, BUT IT **AMOUNTS** TO THE SAME.



YES. I'M **SURE** HE'D RATIONALIZE IT AS SOMETHING **POETIC**, BUT **INDEED**. HE'S A **PAID KILLER**. **YES**.

I HAVE A **LEAD** ON HIS LAST CLIENT THERE. THE LAST **DIRECTED KILL**. I LEAVE **TONIGHT**, TO LEARN WHAT **MERRITT'S** CLIENT **KNOWS**.



WHAT IF HE **WON'T** ADMIT TO ANYTHING?

OH, HE **WILL**.

WHEN I **RETURN** TO **OPAL**, I'LL **RETURN** TO YOU. THAT'S IF YOU **WANT** TO **KNOW** WHAT I'VE **DISCOVERED**?



I **DON'T** WANT TO **KNOW**.

SIGH.

BUT I **KNOW** I'LL **HAVE** TO.



GOOD.

UNTIL **THEN**.



I'VE TRIED VARIOUS THINGS.

DIRECTIONS.

AVENUES.

SOME MANNER THAT MIGHT UNLOCK THE KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED BY MICHAEL THOMAS...OR MIKAAL TOMAS, AS HE WAS KNOWN ON HIS HOME PLANET, AND AS MY SON UNEARTHED FROM THE SHADE'S WRITING.

I'VE TRIED DEVICES TO STIMULATE BRAIN ACTIVITY.

I'VE TRIED MORE GROUNDED FORMS OF THERAPY.

NONE OF IT TO ANY APPARENT EFFECT.

HE STILL TALKS IN ALIEN TONGUE. NOTHING THAT I CAN TRANSLATE OR DEFINE.

I HOPE I CAN ACCOMPLISH THIS...THE TASK AT HAND.

BUT I'M A MAN OF THE STARS... NOT AN INTERPRETER NOR A SPECIALIST ON MEMORY LOST. PERHAPS, INDEED, THIS JOB IS MORE THAN THE SUM OF MY ABILITIES.

I MIGHT HAVE TO

OR PERHAPS... I'M BEING OVERLY HARD ON MYSELF.



I SUPPOSE BY NOW,
YOU MIGHT WONDER
IF NASH HAS A
SECOND NAME.

DON'T
BOTHER
WONDERING.

YOU'LL NEVER
KNOW.

THOUGH... AS SHE ENTERS
ONE OF THE HIDEAWAYS
HER FATHER'S HAD PEPPERED
THROUGHOUT THE
CITY...

SHE'S NASH.
AND THAT'S
THAT.

...AS SHE LOOKS AT
EQUIPMENT THAT
STRAINS UNDER
THE WEIGHT OF
THE DUST UPON
IT...

...AS SHE HEARS THE
VELVETEN KISS OF
THAT SAME DUST
BENEATH HER FEET...

...IT IS
APPARENT...

...SHE INTENDS
TO BECOME
SOMETHING
MORE.



JACK KNIGHT!
WHAT BRINGS
YOU HERE?

JUST PASSING.
'S BEEN A
WHILE.

I NEVER DID
THANK YOU
PROPERLY
FOR HELPING
ME, BACK WHEN
I NEEDED
IT.

HOW DID I HELP YOU?
YOU ENTERED MY
SHOP, WE CHATTED
FOR A FEW MINUTES
AND THEN YOU LEFT.
THAT'S ALL I RECALL.

YEAH, YOU COULD BE RIGHT, AT THAT. BUT I WAS RUNNING AND SCARED. I NEEDED A BREATHER AND I GOT IT HERE. THOSE FEW MINUTES OF CHAT MEANT A LOT TO ME FOR THAT REASON.

AND...

...I WAS WONDERING...

YES?

...YOU MENTIONED HAVING THE SIGHT... BEING ABLE TO PREDICT EVENTS. YOU EVEN GAVE ME A CLUE OR TWO REGARDING WHAT THAT FUTURE MIGHT BE.

I'D LIKE MORE.

I FEEL SOMETHING... SOMETHING--

BREWING?

EXACTLY!

I'LL PAY YOU, OF COURSE. I'D LIKE TO KNOW ANYTHING YOU KNOW.

I'D BE HAPPY TO, JACK. FOR A MODERATE FEE. BUT...

...NOT NOW.

NO?

I HAVE ANOTHER CLIENT. IN FACT SHE'S DUE ANY MO--

TINK

Ah, SPEAK OF THE DEVIL.

HELLO,
CHARITY.
SORRY
I'M LATE.

DON'T WORRY, HON. I HAD A HANDSOME,
YOUNG MAN TO ENTERTAIN ME. THE
TIME FLEW.

JACK, THIS IS
SADIE FALK.

SADIE,
JACK
KNIGHT.

SADIE'S
NEW TO
THE OPAL.
NEWER
THAN ME.

GLAD TO
MEET--

TOO
LATE!

WHAT?

TO MEET
ME. WE'VE
ALREADY
MET.

ERRRR

YOU BUMPED INTO ME.
THE CIRCUS. YOU WEREN'T
LOOKING WHERE YOU
WERE GOING.

OH! YEAH.
YEAH.
THAT WAS
YOU?

FUNNY, WHAT
A SMALL
WORLD--

IF I HAPPEN
TO BE UNLUCKY ENOUGH
TO PASS YOU IN A CROWD
AGAIN, BE MORE CARE-
FUL WHERE YOU STEP.

OR BETTER STILL, HOP ON
THAT COSMIC BROOM-
STICK OF YOURS, TAKE
TO THE SKIES AND KEEP
OUT OF EVERYONE'S
WAY.

DO US
ALL A
FAVOR.

I...

...I...

...I...

MAN, OH
MAN. WHAT
A BITCH.

I HOPE THAT WAS
SOME MENSTRUAL
THING. I HOPE TO
GOD THAT WAS IT.

I'LL DIVE DOWN AN ALLEYWAY,
IF I EVER SEE HER COMING.
SHE HAS NO FEAR OF EVER
BLUMPING INTO ME.

EVER.

NOT EVER.

RING!

HELLO.

HE...HELLO.

IS THIS JACK
KNIGHT?

MAYBE.
WHO'S
ASKING?

FEMALE.
NICE
VOICE
TOO.

I'M CALLING...I THOUGHT I
COULD ASK YOU FOR YOUR
HELP...YOU, WE HAVE SOME-
THING IN COMMON, AND I
HOPE IT'S ENOUGH THAT I
MIGHT ASK A FAVOR FROM
YOU. I KNOW THIS IS OUT
OF THE BLUE, BUT--

WHOA, COWGIRL. A FAVOR?
I DON'T EVEN HAVE A NAME
OUT OF YOU YET. WHAT'S
WITH THE FAVORS?

THE LINK BETWEEN US. YOU AND
ME, WE'RE BOTH THE CHILDREN
OF SUPER-HEROES. OUR FATHERS
ARE FRIENDS, IN FACT. I THOUGHT...
I KNOW THIS IS ABRUPT, BUT...

YEAH. O.K. OUR FATHERS
ARE FRIENDS? WHO'S
YOUR FATHER? YOU
OBVIOUSLY KNOW WHO
MINE IS. WHY WON'T
YOU SAY?


I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE
SUPER-HEROES. YOU DON'T
ACT LIKE ONE. YOU CERTAINLY
DON'T DRESS LIKE ONE.

WELL, I'M NOT SURE WHERE
YOU HEARD THAT, BUT IT'S
ENOUGH OF AN INSULTING
PRESUMPTION ON YOUR PART,
THAT I PROMISE I AM HANG-
ING UP IF I DON'T GET A
NAME OF YOU, TOUT SUITE.

SIGH.

I'M SORRY IF I UPSET YOU.
MY FATHER IS ALAN SCOTT.
HE USED TO BE A GREEN
LANTERN UNTIL RECENTLY.
MY NAME IS JENNY HAYDEN-
SCOTT. THOUGH I GUESS I'M
BETTER KNOWN BY MY
SUPER-HERO NAME.

IT'S JADE.




CALL ME A FOOL
FOR A PRETTY
FACE.

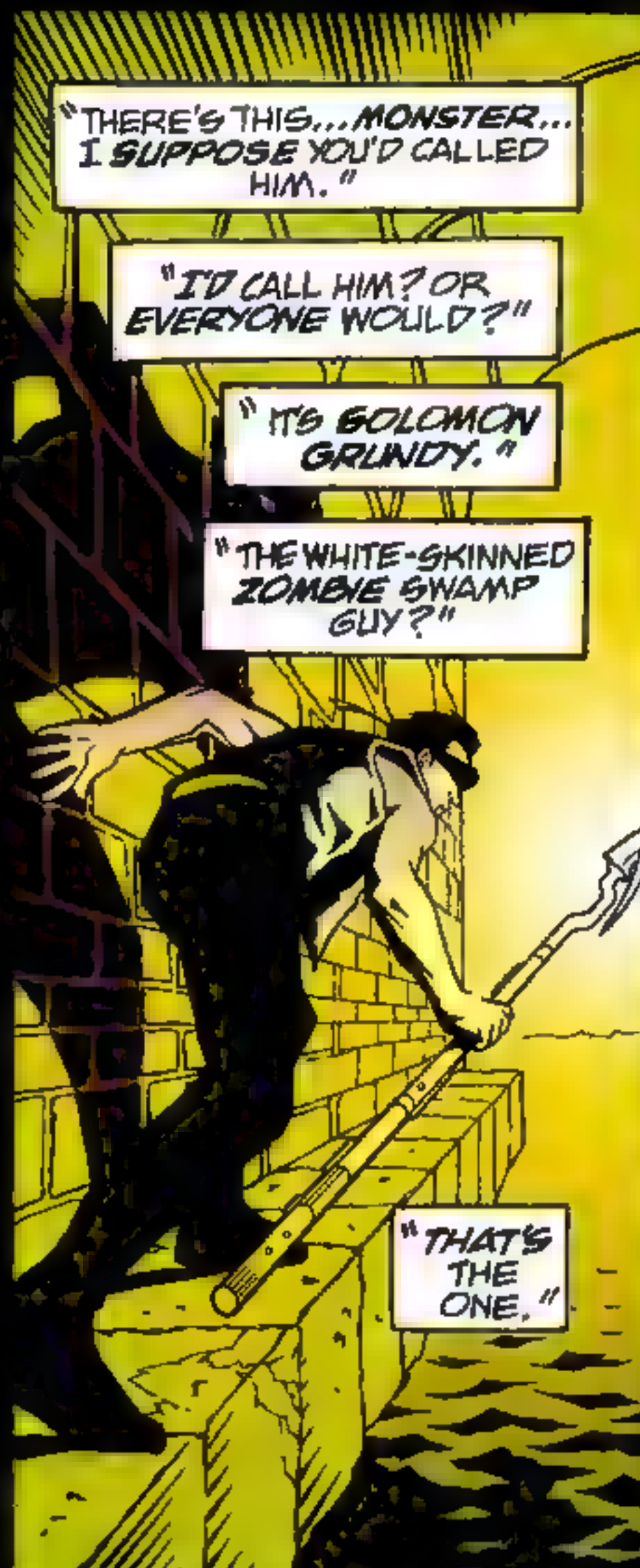
CALL ME A
FOOL.

PERIOD.

I MEAN, EVERYONE'S SEEN
JADE, ON MTV. THE GUEST
STINT ON MELROSE PLACE.
THE INTERVIEW IN BIKINI
MAGAZINE AND THE ARTY
NUDE PHOTOS THAT WENT
WITH IT.



SOMETHING ABOUT
HER GREEN SKIN,
FOR SURE. SOME-
THING THAT MADE
IT HARD TO TURN
HER DOWN. NO
PUN INTENDED.




"THERE'S THIS... MONSTER...
I SUPPOSE YOU'D CALLED
HIM."

"I'D CALL HIM? OR
EVERYONE WOULD?"

"IT'S SOLOMON
GRUNDY."

"THE WHITE-SKINNED
ZOMBIE SWAMP
GUY?"


"THAT'S
THE
ONE."



"HE AND I... WE HAD A FRIEND-
SHIP OF A KIND, ONCE. THERE
WAS A MISUNDERSTANDING.
WE PARTED WAYS."

"BUT I STILL CARE FOR HIS
WELFARE. I DON'T WANT
ANY HARM TO BEFALL HIM."

"I ADMIRE YOUR ALTRUISM,
MS. SCOTT. BUT WHERE DOES
ANY OF THIS CONCERN ME?
WHERE? WHY?"



"OH, SO LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT.
YOU WANT ME TO GO DOWN INTO THE
SEWER, LOOKING FOR A HULKING
MAN-BRUTE? YOU WANT ME TO
RISK LIFE AND LIMB, AND IN A PLACE
THAT SMELLS REALLY BAD? AND
ALL BECAUSE YOU AND SOLLY THE
GRUND HAD A 'KIND OF FRIEND-
SHIP, ONCE'."



"DO I SEEM LIKE I WAS
BORN YESTERDAY,
MS. SCOTT?"

"REPORTS HAVE
REACHED ME THAT
HE'S IN ORAL CITY.
REPORTS... A SIGHT-
ING OR TWO IN YOUR
CITY'S SEWERS. I'D
GO THERE MYSELF,
BUT MY TEAM... THE
BLOOD PACK WAS
CALLED UPON BY
THE GOVERNMENT..."

"WELL,
DO I?"

APPARENTLY
SO.

APPARENTLY
I'M A--

XYARRHHH

SWEET
SON
OF A--

I AM WONDERING...

H. 95

NO
HURRRRTT

THUD

URHH

...WHAT I'M GOING
TO DO ABOUT
MYSELF.

I AGREED TO THIS...NOT BECAUSE IT'S
GOOD AND RIGHT, BUT BECAUSE I'M
TURNED ON BY SOME GREEN-SKINNED
CHICK, WHO PROBABLY WOULDN'T GIVE
ME THE TIME OF DAY IF SHE DIDN'T NEED
ME.

NOOO
AHHHH

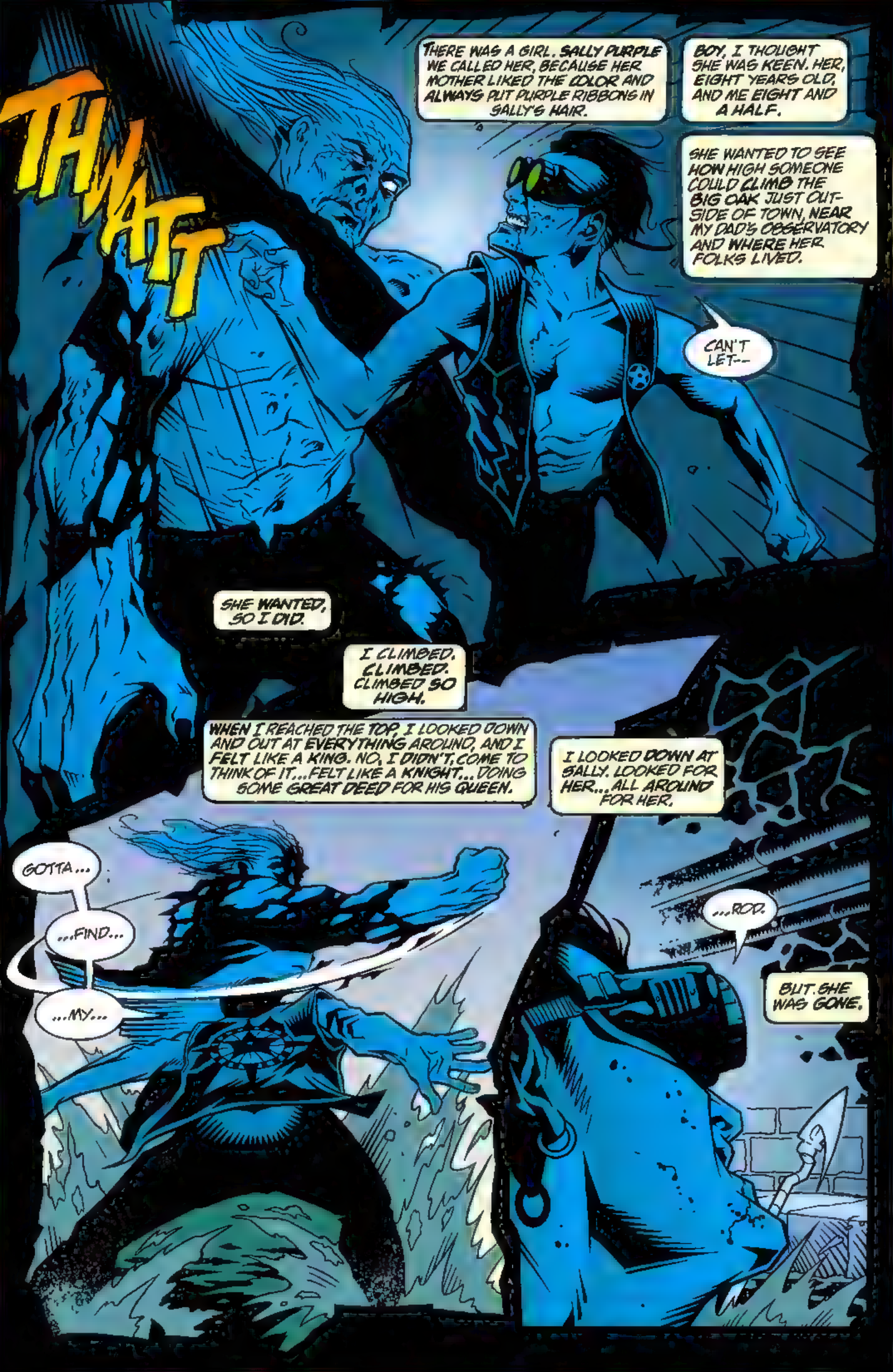
ROD.

THIS.

SPLASHING ABOUT IN...
I DON'T EVEN WANT TO
THINK WHAT...WITH...

...WITH...

...WHATEVER
SOLLY THE GRUND
IS.



THWATT

THERE WAS A GIRL. SALLY PURPLE
WE CALLED HER, BECAUSE HER
MOTHER LIKED THE COLOR AND
ALWAYS PUT PURPLE RIBBONS IN
SALLY'S HAIR.

BOY, I THOUGHT
SHE WAS KEEN. HER,
EIGHT YEARS OLD,
AND ME EIGHT AND
A HALF.

SHE WANTED TO SEE
HOW HIGH SOMEONE
COULD CLIMB THE
BIG OAK JUST OUT-
SIDE OF TOWN, NEAR
MY DAD'S OBSERVATORY
AND WHERE HER
FOLKS LIVED.

CAN'T
LET--

SHE WANTED,
SO I DID.

I CLIMBED.
CLIMBED.
CLIMBED SO
HIGH.

WHEN I REACHED THE TOP, I LOOKED DOWN
AND OUT AT EVERYTHING AROUND, AND I
FELT LIKE A KING. NO, I DIDN'T, COME TO
THINK OF IT... FELT LIKE A KNIGHT... DOING
SOME GREAT DEED FOR HIS QUEEN.

I LOOKED DOWN AT
SALLY. LOOKED FOR
HER... ALL AROUND
FOR HER.

GOTTA...

...FIND...

...MY...

...ROD.

BUT SHE
WAS GONE.

SALLY'S FRIENDS HAD JUST
GOTTEN TWISTER BOUGHT
FOR THEM, AND SHE'D RUN
OFF TO PLAY IT.

SHE'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT
ME. I COULD HAVE BEEN
CARRIED OFF BY AN EAGLE
FOR ALL SHE CARED.

I NEVER SPOKE TO HER
AGAIN. NEVER FORGAVE.

...SHE'S JUST ANOTHER
SALLY PURPLE.
AND ME, I'M AN IDIOT.

IF I DO THE RIGHT THINGS
BUT FOR THE WRONG REASONS,
THEN I'M JUST DOING THE WRONG
THINGS REALLY, THINGS THAT
AREN'T TRUE TO ME.

TRUE TO---

EVEN AFTER SHE WAS RUN
DOWN AND KILLED BY THAT
DRUNK DRIVER, I NEVER
FORGAVE HER.

NNNNYYY...

JADE... GETTING
ME TO VENTURE
DOWN HERE...

...HAARR--



OWW.

YOU
HURT
ME.

WHY...

...YOU...

...HURT...

...ME ?!

GEE, BIG GUY. I DUNNO.
COULD IT BE BECAUSE YOU
WERE THROWING ME AROUND
LIKE A PUPPET?

MAYBE?
JUST
MAYBE?

WAS JUST TRYING
GRAB SO YOU
NOT HURT
GRUNDY.

HURT
GRUNDY
ANYWAY.

I NOT MEAN
HURT YOU.

I WAS...
WAS...

DON'T KNOW
WHY. SCARED.

ARE YOU GOING
TO HURT ME NOW?
OR IS ALL THIS
ROLLING AND CHASING
IN THE WET OVER?

OVER.
GRUNDY
TIRED.

WELL, JACKY TIRED
TOO. WHAT SAY WE
GET OUT OF HERE?

I KNOW SOMEONE
YOU CAN STAY WITH.
HE'LL LOOK AFTER
YOU, UNTIL WE WORK
OUT WHAT TO DO
WITH YOU AND
WHY YOU'RE
HERE.

YOU HUNGRY?
WHAT DO YOU
EAT?

FROGS.

OH.

LEAST I HOPE
DAD WILL.



THE SYMBOLS AND THE SIGNS
WITHIN HER FATHER'S NOTES
SHE UNDERSTOOD.

NOT THAT SHE UNDERSTOOD
SCIENCE. BUT SHE UNDER-
STOOD HER FATHER AND HIS
WORK.

AND THAT WAS
ENOUGH.

SHE KNEW THE RIGHT
BUTTONS TO PUSH. THE
GAUGES TO READ. THE
LEVERS TO PULL.

BUT AS THE GAGES FILLED HER
LUNGS AND THE FLASHES OF
ENERGY PULSED FROM GLOBED
DISCHARGERS, HITTING HER
BODY AGAIN AND AGAIN, SHE
COULDN'T SAY WHAT THEY
WERE OR WHY THEY DID.

SHE KNEW BRIGHT LIGHT
FROM THE ENERGY THAT
TAP DANCED BEFORE
HER.

SHE KNEW THE HUM OF A BIG
DADDY BULLFROG, THAT
FILLED THE AIR, AND WAS
ACTUALLY THE WHIR OF
COUNTLESS ENGINES AND
GYROS IN SYNCH WITH THEM-
SELVES.

SHE THOUGHT BRIEFLY,
SOMETHING THAT HAD,
FUNNILY, NEVER OCCURRED
TO HER PRIOR TO THIS...

...HOW BRILLIANT
HER FATHER WAS.
TO HAVE INVENTED
ANYTHING... BUT
ESPECIALLY THIS.

AND THEN SHE
THREW UP.
AND THEN SHE
FAINTED.

AND WHEN SHE AWOKE,
THE SYMBOLS AND THE
SIGNS AND WHETHER
SHE UNDERSTOOD
THEM OR NOT, NO
LONGER MATTERED.

ONLY ONE
THING.

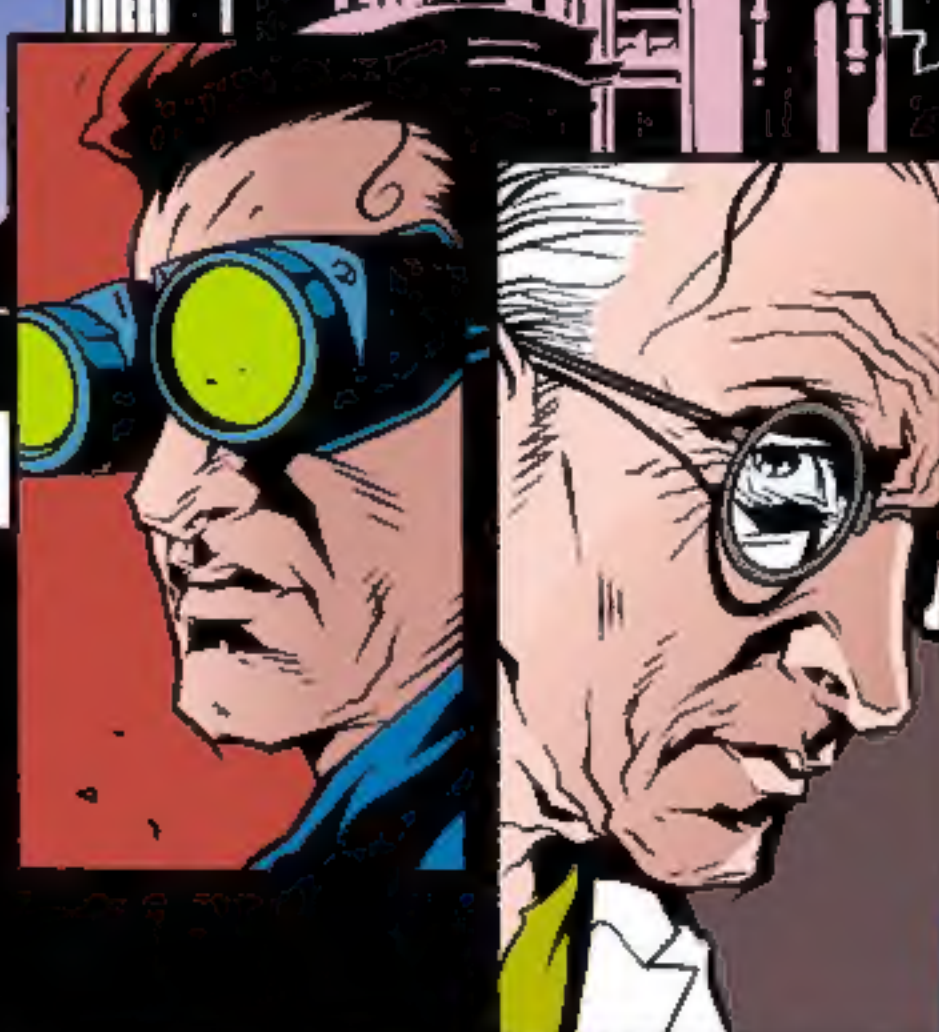
ONE WORD.

SUCCESS.

SOME
EXPRESSIONS
GET USED TOO
OFTEN.

"TOMORROW IS ANOTHER
DAY" IS ONE SUCH TERM.

THOUGH FOR MANY, THEIR
LIVES MIRED IN ROUTINE,
SUCH IS INDEED THE WAY,
THE SAME, THE SAME, THE
SAME, DAWN TO DUSK, TO
NIGHT, TO DAWN AGAIN.



BUT NOT IN OPAL CITY.
NOT THIS CITY. AT LEAST
NOT THIS TOMORROW.

A DRAMA IS BEGINNING.

THE PLAYERS ARE GATHERED.



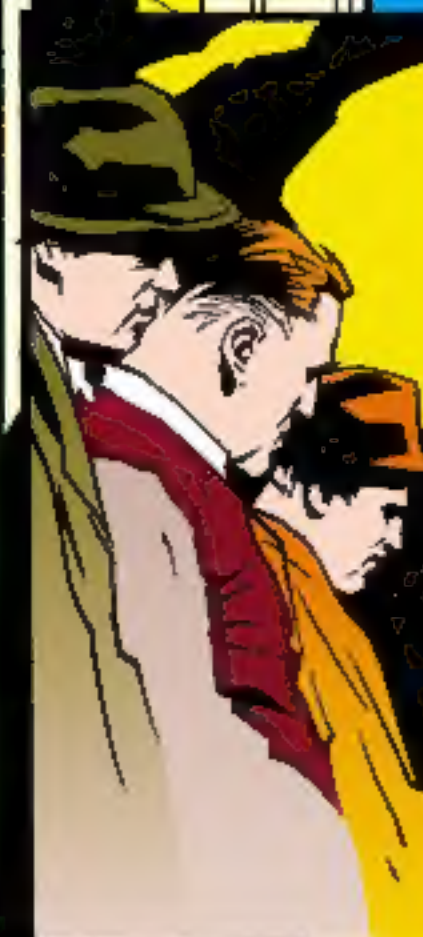
AND
EVERYONE
WILL HAVE A
ROLE TO
PLAY.



TOMORROW, ON A
DAY UNLIKE ANY
OTHER.



WHEN WHAT MAKES A HERO
WILL BE DEFINED IN THE
THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS
OF EACH SOUL SHOWN
HERE.



OR WHAT
MAKES A
VILLAIN...

WHAT
MAKES
A
VILLAIN...

...AND AN ENEMY
FOR LIFE.

JACK
KNIGHT...

...I AM GOING TO
GIVE YOU SUCH
A BIG WET
KISS.

JUST YOU
WAIT.

THE END

Deadman Wade

"THIS IS WHAT
AWESOME
LOOKS LIKE".

DCP